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ABSTRACT

Designed for elementary school students, the unit presents five brief sessions for teaching an historical event using a fine arts approach. By incorporating dance, drama, art, and music into the study of historical events, students heighten their awareness of themselves and of the characters in history. In session 1, students reenact and discuss the political and emotional climate which prompted the Pilgrims to leave England. In session 2, students base creative writing, drama, and research activities around the theme of a busy harbor. Session 3 focuses on the Mayflower--the feelings, discomforts, and interpersonal conflicts which may have occurred. Students discuss feelings and emotions upon the discovery of land and act out the Pilgrims' arrival in session 4. The final session concludes the unit by reviewing vocabulary, relating student experiences, and providing additional suggestions. This document is part of a collection of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center project. (LH)

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A Journey

A Unit to Develop Self-Awareness Through a Fine Arts Approach

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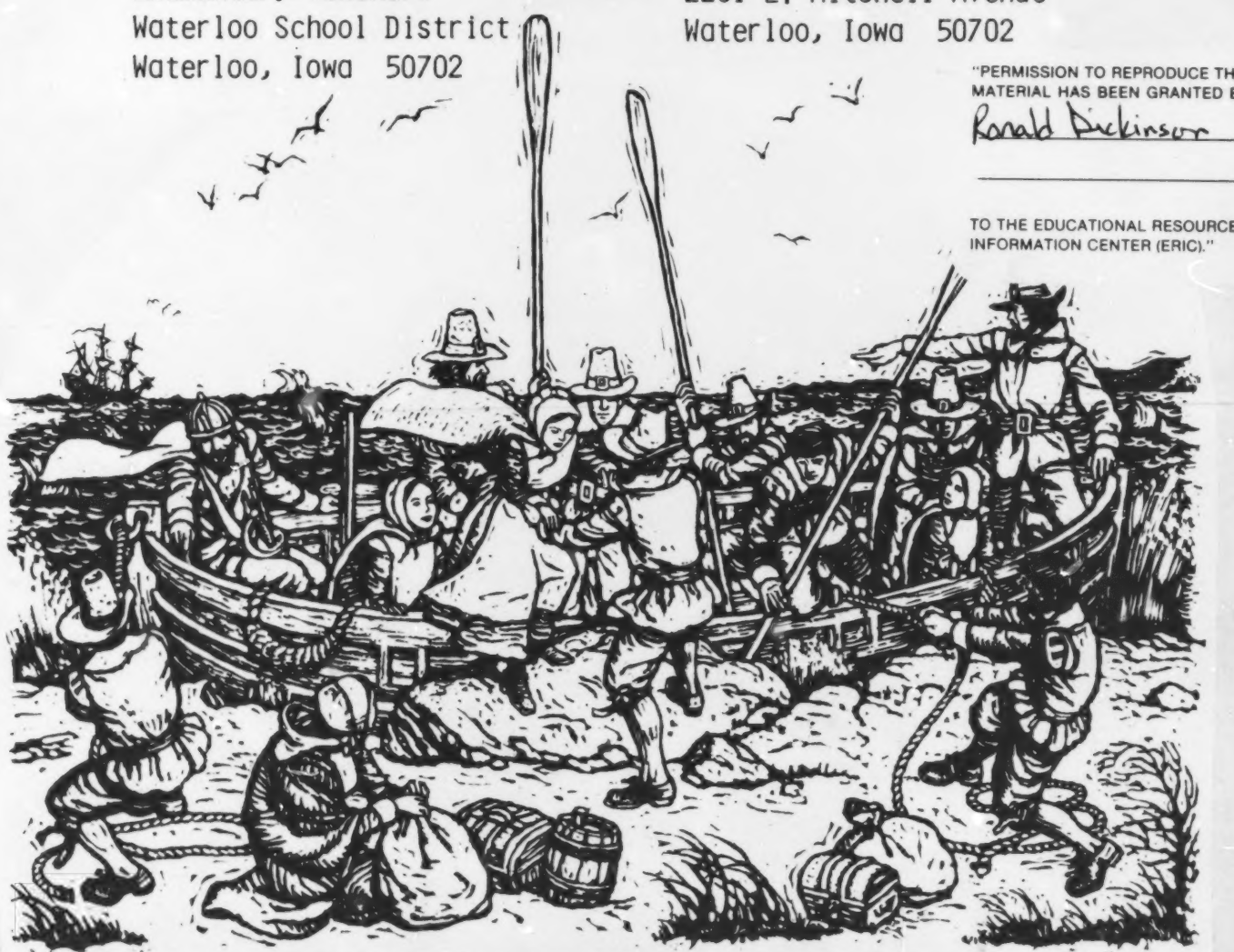

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION..... 1

POEM..... 2

LESSON PLAN..... 2

Session One..... 2

Session Two..... 3

Session Three..... 4

Session Four..... 4

Session Five..... 5

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS..... 5

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 6

A JOURNEY

A unit to develop self awareness through a fine arts approach.

Carole Hickins Jack Whitchelo

INTRODUCTION

The following unit is a suggested way of teaching a historical event by using a fine arts approach. This unit can serve as a model in further planning for the use of dance, drama, art, and music as an integral part of everyday study. It is written as a saturation unit or can be broken into separate lessons, incorporating fine arts teachers.

Teachers or counselors should note that in using this unit they must provide their students with adequate organization and basic skills for implementation. Possible sources of background can be found in the bibliography listed at the end of this unit.

It is our belief that we learn better using all of our senses - by working through this technique we assist in the growth of concentration in students. Most teaching methods rely on perceptions - either visual or auditory - better still the combination of the two. We learn through a kinesthetic approach, particularly in self-awareness and in awareness of others in day to day living.

POEM

Creative Dance Movement

Dance is movement,
Movement is life,
Life is learning.
Dance is bending, stretching,
Reaching and pulling.
Dance is leading and following,
Joining and relating.
Dance is order and discipline
Made friendly and inviting.
It can melt shyness, kindle awareness
And foster freedom of expression.
Dance is a moving beginning
Toward creative enrichment;
It is a basic exploration
Into living, learning, growing.

Taken from "Creative Dance Movement"
brochure, East Lansing, Michigan

Any one or all of the arts could be substituted for the word "dance" in the above poem - our point being - isn't this the way to totally educate a child?

LESSON PLAN

Approximate teaching time: 2½ hours or 5 sessions of 25 minutes each.

Objective: To develop sensitivity and self-awareness using a historical event as a medium.

SESSION ONE

Setting

Is in England. Pilgrims are discussing the political and emotional climate facing them which results in their decision to leave.

Activities

1. Students can chart cause and effect.
2. Discussion of the feelings and unrest in this time in history.
3. Students will walk around the room in silence using only their bodies as communication.
4. Show emotions such as extreme unhappiness, anger, frustration, fright, etc.
5. Have students meet in groups to pantomime situation through a silent communication.
6. Students return on a signal to their place at the beginning.

End of Session One. Background music can be played to set mood. It should be something that is soft and can project unrest or stress.

SESSION TWO

Setting

A harbor - set mood through discussion, pictures, etc. of activity at a busy harbor. This discussion will build vocabulary on different types of drama and movement to act out. These words should be saved for future use in creative writing or verses for songs.

Activities

1. Find your own place in the room. (Use a signal such as tamborine, drum, or triangle for control.)
2. Students pose in a still life picture of a person at the harbor (traveler, dock hand, relative/friend saying goodbye, etc.).
3. On signal the picture comes to life. Activity is dramatized and ended at next signal.
4. No sound is used, only actions.
5. Follow-up activities can be the class doing research on boats during that period, imports, exports, pilgrims that sailed, etc.

SESSION THREE

Setting

On the Mayflower - one huge ship or several ships can be portrayed. Tables can be turned over and used as a base. Ribbon, chalk, tape, or string can be used to rope off the boat outline - either laid on floor or use students holding the rope.

Activities

1. Discussion of the feelings, discomforts, etc. on ship. How the close quarters created conflicts.
2. Use a chart to record words.
3. Music, "The Sea," by Dubussy or any similar sea record can be used for background.
4. Students should express emotions of being irritable, cramped, sea sick, etc.
5. Swaying motions - smaller locomotor motions.
6. Sounds of moans and groans used.
7. Storm effect by using sound effects and turning lights on and off. Music teacher could assist in storm sounds and record them. Art teacher could assist by making slides to use as background, etc.
8. Follow-up session would be on discussion of relating this to how they feel when crowded, irritable, ill, etc. Guidance counselor used here to further discuss stress and awareness in an impossible situation.

SESSION FOUR

Setting

Discovery of land and following preparations. Discussion would deal with feelings and emotions of arrival, jubilation, anticipation, and fear of unknown.

Activities

1. Aware of getting their "land legs" back - would be stiff and find walking on land hard just as a rolling motion or bowed walk was used on board.

2. Students work in groups to prepare land, planting, building, etc. A still life picture effect again (refer to Session Two). Build a common house, unpack, scout, hunt, etc.

SESSION FIVE

Setting

In the common house. Discussion on the progress they have made and what they have gone through.

Activities

1. Bring out charts and review vocabulary.

2. Write stories on how they felt at a certain time.

3. Discuss how this relates to their own experiences at school or home.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

This completes the unit, however, other activities can be included allowing for time, monies, and space. These activities could be: papier mache, photography, and costume designing.

Another fun activity is on-the-spot interviews with the pilgrims, also a new version would be written or updated.

Any lesson can be taught and developed into this type of unit. It depends on each class and the teacher's creativity.

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